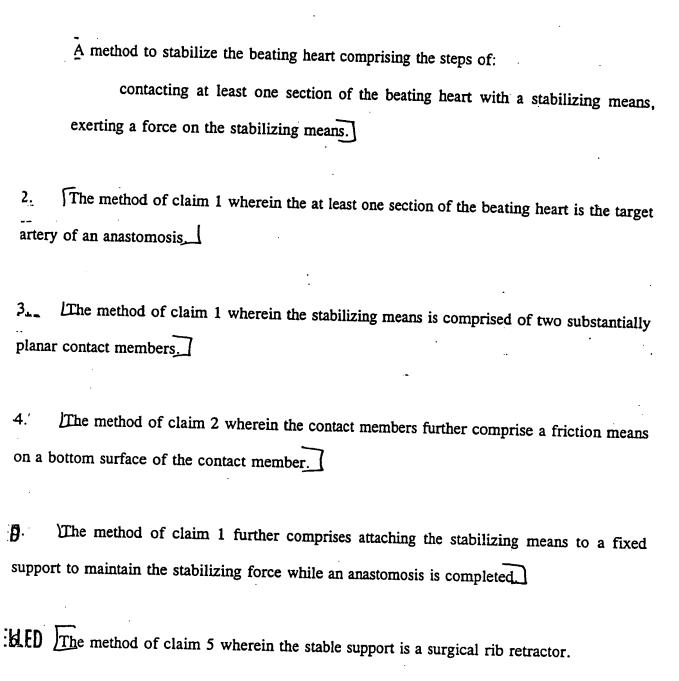
CLAIMS



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- A method to install a coronary artery bypass graft from a source artery to a target coronary artery while the heart is beating comprising the steps of:
- 1) providing an access space to the beating heart by a surgical procedure selected from the group consisting of a thoracotomy and a sternotomy,
 - 2) introducing a stabilizing means through the access space,
- 3) contacting the surface of the beating heart proximate to the target artery at an anastomosis with a stabilizing means,
- 4) exerting a stabilizing force on the beating heart by positioning the stabilizing means,
 - 5) restricting blood flow through the target artery while allowing the heart to continue to beat,
 - 6) sewing an anastomosis to the target artery,
 - 7) re-establishing blood flow through the target artery.

A device for use in a cardiovascular surgery on the beating heart comprising:

a means for stabilizing the beating heart comprising contact members shaped to engage the surface of the beating heart, said contact members attached to a shaft means.

9 The device of claim 8 further comprising an attachment for anchoring said shaft means to a stable support.

- 16. The device of claim 9 further comprising friction means on the bottom surface of said contact members.
- The device of claim 10 wherein said shaft means is comprised of a rigid shaft having a push block affixed at the end thereof, wherein said push block engages a ball joint proximate to said contact members.
- Said rigid

 The device of claim 11 wherein the rigid shaft is operably connected to a fixture at the proximal end of the device.
- 13. The device of claim 8 wherein said shaft means is further comprised at a telescope release mechanism surrounding a housing.
- 14. The device of claim 8 wherein said contact member has a frame, a spring mechanism, and a frame extension operably connected to said frame and said spring mechanism.
- 15. The device of claim 8 wherein said shaft means is connected to a single contact member.
- The device of claim 25 having a pair of shaft means interconnected by a pivot at an intermediate point of said shaft means.

The device of claim 15 wherein the said shaft means is adjustable along its length by continuous positioning of a first portion of said shaft means which engages a second portion and moves slidably in relation thereto.

The device of claim 17 wherein said shaft means is further comprised of a spring mechanism disposed between said first and second portions of said shaft means and wherein said spring mechanism surrounds a rigid shaft connected to one of said first and second shaft members.

19. A device for use in cardiac surgery comprising:

means for stabilizing the beating heart comprising a sheath member having support attachments positioned along its length.

- The device of claim 19 wherein the support attachments are inflatable.
- The device of claim 20 wherein the sheath member has at least one lumen connected to said inflatable support attachments.
- The device of claim 19 in combination with a rib retractor wherein a portion of said sheath member is attached to said retractor.